

POLITICS AND MORALS

\$19

be ready for war, which, when undertaken for honour or some supreme national interest, is wholesome and elevating. For war is not a necessary evil but an instrument of statesmanship and a school of patriotism. Only in war for the Fatherland does a nation become truly and spiritually united. It is indeed the only medicine for a sick people. It is idealism that demands war and materialism that rejects it. Dreams of perpetual peace are the mark of a stagnant and decadent generation, for conflict is the law of life. "The hope of banishing war is not only meaningless but immoral, for its disappearance would turn the earth into a great temple of selfishness." Here is the echo of Moltke's familiar aphorism: "Perpetual peace is a dream, and not even a beautiful dream." Treitschke had Germany in view, and Machiavelli Italy. But how slender is the difference between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century! ** The essence of a state/" declares Treitschke, ** is firstly power; secondly power; thirdly power." With such a philosophy we shall never succeed in organising the world; for the cult of power leads to the twin evils of the idolatry of the state and the glorification of war,

Is the outlook really so hopeless, the problem really so insoluble, as these teachers suggest? That the struggle between Kratos and Ethos will continue indefinitely we can readily believe. But may not the relations of the combatants change? May not Ethos extend its sway at the cost of Kratos, even if it cannot hope for victory all along the line? Does not the history of man illustrate the slow advance of moral principle, the occupation of one piece of territory after another previously claimed without challenge by the rival principle of force? May not this process be continued almost indefinitely as

pioneers rescue the desert and the forest for the
haunts of men,
and engineers turn the shallow waters into
fertile land ?

Our answer to these questions will depend in
the main on
our view of human nature. The differences in
the systems of
political philosophy throughout the ages reflect
still deeper
divergences in our interpretation of man. If we
believe, Hke
Machiavelli and Hobbes, that he is nearer to
the beasts than
to the angels, we shall lean to the doctrines of
autocracy and
the sovereign state. It is equally natural that
those who take
a more favourable view should contest the
universal supremacy
of force, and should preach the gospel of
partnership and co-
operation on every plane. " Man," declared
Humboldt, is
naturally more disposed to beneficent than to
selfish actions."